

WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1. An apparatus for scanning a machine readable symbol and providing an audio feedback signal stored in the machine readable symbol to a user, the apparatus comprising:

5 an input device capable of detecting the machine readable symbol and generating an electrical signal indicative of the machine readable symbol;

a controller operatively coupled to the input device for receiving the electrical signal indicative of the machine readable symbol;

10 a memory device operatively coupled to the controller, the memory device storing a digital representation of the electrical signal indicative of the machine readable symbol; and

15 a speaker operatively coupled to the controller, the controller causing the speaker to generate the audio feedback signal from the digital representation of the electrical signal indicative of the machine readable symbol.

2. An apparatus as defined in claim 1, wherein the input device comprises an optical code scanner.

3. An apparatus as defined in claim 2, wherein the optical code scanner includes an identification code, the controller causing the speaker to generate the audio feedback signal only if the identification code matches a predetermined identification code.

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4. An apparatus as defined in claim 3, wherein the controller causes the speaker to generate an alternate audio feedback signal if the identification code matches an alternate identification code, the alternate audio feedback signal being derived from the digital representation of the electrical signal indicative of the machine readable symbol.

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5. An apparatus as defined in claim 3, wherein the optical code scanner is color coded based on the identification code.

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6. An apparatus as defined in claim 3, wherein the optical code scanner includes a first pass code, the controller receiving a second pass code, the controller causing the speaker to generate the audio feedback signal only if the first pass code matches the second pass code.

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7. An apparatus as defined in claim 6, wherein the second pass code is received via the input device capable of detecting the machine readable symbol.

8. An apparatus as defined in claim 6, further comprising a keypad operatively coupled to the controller, wherein the second pass code is received via the keypad.

5 9. An apparatus as defined in claim 1, further comprising a visual display operatively coupled to the controller, the controller causing the visual display to display a first visual prompt, the first visual prompt requesting product identification information, the controller being structured to parse the digital representation of the electrical signal indicative of the machine
10 readable symbol into the requested product identification information and visual data, the controller being structured to cause the visual display to display a second visual prompt based on the visual data.

15 10. An apparatus as defined in claim 9, wherein the input device includes an identification code, the controller causing the visual display to display the second visual prompt only if the identification code matches a predetermined identification code.

20 11. An apparatus as defined in claim 10, wherein the controller causes the visual display to display a third visual prompt if the identification code matches an alternate identification code.

12. A method of providing an audio feedback signal to a scanning pen user, the method comprising the steps of:

receiving a first electrical signal indicative of a machine readable symbol, the machine readable symbol storing the audio feedback signal;

converting the electrical signal into a digital code, at least a portion of the digital code being indicative of the audio feedback signal;

causing a speaker to produce the audio feedback signal based on the at least a portion of the digital code.

13. A method as defined in claim 12, wherein the step of receiving a first electrical signal indicative of a machine readable symbol comprises the step of receiving an optical code signal.

14. A method as defined in claim 12, further comprising the steps of:

reading an identification code stored in a scanning pen;

parsing an authorization code from the converted digital code;

and

determining that the identification code matches the authorization code.

15. A method as defined in claim 12, further comprising the steps of:

reading a first pass code stored in a scanning pen;

receiving a second pass code; and

determining that the first pass code matches the second pass code.

16. A method as defined in claim 15, wherein the step of receiving a second pass code comprises the step of optically scanning a pass code symbol.

17. A method as defined in claim 12, further comprising the step of optically scanning a style sheet code.

18. A method as defined in claim 12, further comprising the steps of:

displaying a first visual prompt requesting product identification information;

parsing the digital code into the requested product identification information and visual data;

displaying a second visual prompt based on the visual data.

19. A method as defined in claim 18, further comprising the steps of:

reading an identification code stored in a scanning pen;

parsing an authorization code from the converted digital code;

and

determining that the identification code matches the authorization code.

20. A method of facilitating an Internet shopping sequence, the method comprising the steps of:

prompting a user, via a first visual prompt, to enter first information associated with the Internet shopping sequence, the first visual prompt being displayed on a portable symbol scanning device;

receiving data indicative of a machine readable symbol at the portable symbol scanning device; and

parsing the data indicative of the machine readable symbol into the first information and a second visual prompt.

21. A method as defined in claim 20, further comprising the step of causing a speaker to produce an audio feedback signal based on the data indicative of the machine readable symbol.

22. A method as defined in claim 21, further comprising the steps of:

reading an identification code stored in the portable symbol scanning device;

parsing an authorization code from the data indicative of the machine readable symbol; and

determining that the identification code matches the authorization code.

23. A method as defined in claim 21, further comprising the steps of:

reading a first pass code stored in the portable symbol scanning device;

receiving a second pass code; and

determining that the first pass code matches the second pass code.

24. A method as defined in claim 23, wherein the step of receiving a second pass code comprises the step of optically scanning a pass code symbol.

25. A method as defined in claim 21, further comprising the step of optically scanning a style sheet code.

26. An apparatus for facilitating an Internet shopping sequence, the apparatus comprising:

a visual display structured to generate a plurality of visual prompts;

a scanner structured to convert a machine readable symbol into symbol data; and

a controller operatively coupled to the visual display and the scanner, the controller being structured to cause the visual display to display a first visual prompt, the first visual prompt requesting product identification information, the controller being structured to receive the symbol data from the scanner, the controller being structured to parse the symbol data into the requested product identification information and visual data, the controller being structured to cause the visual display to display a second visual prompt based on the visual data.

27. An apparatus as defined in claim 26, wherein the controller is further structured to:

read an identification code stored in the scanner;
parse an authorization code from the symbol data; and
determine that the identification code matches the authorization code.

28. An apparatus as defined in claim 26, further comprising a speaker operatively coupled to the controller, the controller being structured to cause speaker to produce an audio feedback signal based on the symbol data.

29. An apparatus as defined in claim 28, wherein the controller is further structured to:

read an identification code stored in the scanner;

parse an authorization code from the symbol data; and
determine that the identification code matches the authorization
code.

5 30. A method of facilitating an Internet shopping sequence,
the method comprising the steps of:

prompting a user, via a first audio prompt, to enter first
information associated with the Internet shopping sequence, the first audio
prompt being generated by a portable symbol scanning device;

10 receiving data indicative of a machine readable symbol at the
portable symbol scanning device; and

 parsing the data indicative of the machine readable symbol into
the first information and a second audio prompt.

15 31. A method as defined in claim 30, further comprising the
step of displaying a visual feedback signal based on the data indicative of the
machine readable symbol.

20 32. An apparatus for facilitating an Internet shopping
sequence, the apparatus comprising:
 a speaker structured to generate a plurality of audio prompts;
 a scanner structured to convert a machine readable symbol into
symbol data; and

a controller operatively coupled to the speaker and the scanner,
the controller being structured to cause the speaker to produce a first audio
prompt, the first audio prompt requesting product identification information,
the controller being structured to receive the symbol data from the scanner,
the controller being structured to parse the symbol data into the requested
product identification information and audio data, the controller being
structured to cause the speaker to produce a second audio prompt based on
the audio data.

33. An apparatus as defined in claim 32, further comprising a
display device operatively coupled to the controller, the controller being
structured to cause display device to produce a visual feedback display based
on the symbol data.